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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION US-NORTH KOREA; FUTURE US AMBASSADOR TO ARGENTINA EARL ANTHONY WAYNE; RESIGNATION OF DUSTR ROBERT ZOELICK; US-BOLIVIAN FTA; US-MERCOSUR; US-ARGENTINA; LATIN AMERICAN POPULISM; IRAQ; ARGENTINE JUDICIAL SECURITY; MONEY LAUNDERING; MIDDLE EAST 06/20/06; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend newspapers cover the escalation of tension between the US and North Korea; the future US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne; the resignation of DEPSEC Robert Zoellick; Bolivian President Morales' alleged willingness to sign an FTA with the US; Chacho Alvarez' statements about Mercosur, Uruguay and the US; the US perception of Argentina as a moderating element in South America; the return of populism in Latin America; US President Bush's recovery in opinion surveys; Argentine judicial security; the status of Argentine anti-money laundering legislation; the situation in the Middle East; and US officials receiving information that Al Qaeda operatives had plans to gas NY subways in 2003.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Alarm over North Korean missiles"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (06/20) "The escalation of tension between the US and North Korea reached alarming levels yesterday when it was made public that Pyongyang had finished refueling a long-range missile and that it could eventually bring a nuclear warhead within reach of the US.

"According to experts, this indicates that North Korea's first test of this kind in eight years could be imminent, which the White House termed a 'provocation.'"

- "The new US Ambassador will arrive in September"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (06/20) "The new US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, will arrive in the country in September, that is to say after the US summer vacation.

"According to US diplomatic and legislative sources, the obstacles to his nomination have already been removed. The US Senate will reportedly confirm him within ten days.

"Yesterday, Mike Matera, a US Department of State official, left the US for Argentina, and he will preside over the embassy after the departure of the current US Ambassador Lino Gutierrez and until Wayne arrives in the country.

"Wayne's agenda in Argentina will be full of economic issues... He will focus on the investment climate, the expansion of bilateral trade, and FTAA promotion."

- "Latin America loses an ally in the Bush administration"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (06/20) "Latin America lost an ally and one of the most moderate voices within the Bush administration after Deputy Secretary Robert Zoellick announced his resignation.

"Zoellick has a thorough knowledge of Latin America (and particularly of Argentina), and ever since he took over, Zoellick attempted to downplay US diplomatic rhetoric vis-a-vis Caracas, Brasilia, Buenos Aires and Mexico."

- "Evo wants to discuss an FTA with the US"

Conservative "La Prensa" reports (06/19) "According to Bolivian Minister of Production and Micro-enterprises, Celinda Sosa, Evo Morales is willing to negotiate an FTA with the US in a notable change in its foreign and economic policy.

"Sosa said that a Bolivian committee is working on a joint proposal with 'big, mid-sized and small producers,' who are pushing to have negotiations with the US. Sosa said to the media 'We are willing to negotiate an FTA with the US that will benefit productive sectors.'"

- "Alvarez: 'Mercosur is the only State policy'"

Lucas Colonna, on special assignment in Montevideo for daily-of-record "La Nacion," reports on an interview with Chacho Alvarez, who says (06/18) "... 'Uruguay is not negotiating a deal with the US but is trying to make progress on an FTA that will improve the insertion of its economy in the US, an issue that is not against Mercosur.'

"... Regarding Venezuela's entry into Mercosur, Alvarez said 'There can be within Mercosur one country that is politically confronting

the US, but this antagonism is not transferred to the entire bloc, because Mercosur does not have one common foreign policy.'"

- "Unparalleled opportunity for Kirchner"

Joaquin Morales Sola, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (06/18) "... Does Kirchner represent some hope of South American contention for Washington? Some say in Washington 'We wish Kirchner could help us with Chavez, but we do not perceive that intention.' Instead, they accept that the Argentine president played a moderating role in the Bolivia of Evo. When it comes down to Venezuela, Washington trusts Lula more than Kirchner...

"... Regarding Lavagna's candidacy, Europe and Washington have received Lavagna's possible candidacy as a contribution to the opening of democratic debate. Lavagna is not the most appreciated Argentine economist by Washington... However, the official insistence in relating him to alleged US strategies is noteworthy. Argentine Ambassador to Washington, Bordon, and high-ranking US State Department government officials, definitely denied that Lavagna met with Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs Tom Shannon while Lavagna was in the US."

- "Populism threatens to return to Latin America"

Leading "Clarín" carries an op-ed piece by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former Brazilian president, who writes (06/18) "... The threat posed by the return of populism to Latin America, and more specifically to South America, will not bring easy alternatives.

"In the '90s, we conceived of South American economic and political integration as based on democracy and a market economy.

"The groundwork of the entire building could be undermined if populism returned to the country, disguised as a left wing movement, bringing with it the game of old and personal rivalries instead of institutional cooperation among countries."

- "Bush's strategy to move on"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," writes (06/17) "... Everything that occurred during last week in the life of the US president seems to be part of an elaborate choreography, which was developed to revive the administration's damaged power. And, actually, this political ballet is giving him something of what he was searching for.

"According to the most recent opinion surveys, Bush's downfall not only stopped but his popularity rate showed signs of a recovery.

"Regarding Iraq, news is even better... According to a Gallup opinion survey, 48% of Americans believe now that their country 'will probably' or 'surely' win the war against the Iraqi resistance. This implies a 17-point recovery vis-à-vis last April.

"... However, any circumstantial revival in the actions of the Iraqi resistance and an increase in the signs of an imminent civil war... could delete the current, sweet news."

12. EDITORIALS

- "Realities and styles vis-à-vis investors"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (06/18) "... The evolution of the Argentine economic situation has boosted investment, and according to business opinion surveys, there are plans for investment in the future. However, the incorporation of foreign investment has not been really important due to some discouraging elements.

"... For a positive investment climate, opportunities of profitability are indispensable, but a friendly attitude of authorities toward investors is also crucial.

"And the current price accords policy can also discourage investment."

- "The struggle against money laundering"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (06/19) "... Argentina has started to attend to the problem posed by money laundering, but the weak legal steps taken have not been supported by an attitude of commitment in the struggle against money laundering...

"This situation has led the FATF (Financial Action Task Force) to ask for amendments to the current legislation in force...

"One pending point is the analysis of the eventual inclusion of terrorist financing as a crime, which is meaningful in the international scenario. Another point is the functioning of the Financial Information Unit."

"Fighting money laundering is crucial in the struggle against crimes such as narco-trafficking, terrorism and corruption. Argentina is late on this issue, as pointed out by international institutions."

- "Humanitarian crisis in Palestine territories"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (06/20) "The Gaza Strip is going through a humanitarian crisis that affects the most vulnerable Palestinian people and, as a consequence, the possibilities of peace in the region.

"... The confronted Palestinian factions, the governments directly involved in the conflict, and the Western powers should seek a formula to reduce tensions and agree upon some peaceful alternative for living together in harmony.

"All of them, to greater or lesser extent, should be blamed for the current humanitarian crisis and the violent consequences that this could bring in a perhaps immediate future."

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GUTIERREZ